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ABSTRACT

Collaboration between public schools and universities through implementation of professional development schools may be central to any effort to improve education in an increasingly complex society. Chicago State University (Illinois), in conjunction with a cadre of stake holders from Chicago Public Schools, implemented a professional development school pilot project (The Village Teaching Project) during the summer term of 1996. The project sought to orient preservice teachers in the early stages of their training and focused not only on discrete technical knowledge but also on issues of everyday practice for which no apparent technical knowledge exists. Expert teachers involved in the project provided a real world perspective on practice and on what underlies excellence in the teaching profession. Instruction was provided within the context of a "Village Teaching" paradigm in which knowledge represents a socially constructed entity. Broad, measurable outcomes of the project included assessment of the extent to which preservice teachers processed knowledge about the teaching experience on the basis of cognitive, emotional, or behavioral reactions. Project evaluation involved analysis of "well-remembered events" along with other journal data. The Village Teaching Project represents an attempt to address areas of need in teacher preparation by laying a foundation on which preservice teachers can build. (Contains 19 references.) (Author)

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Village Teaching: A Multidimensional Professional Development Schools Model for Preservice Teachers at Chicago State University

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ABSTRACT

Collaboration between public schools and universities through implementation of professional development schools may be central to any effort to improve education in an increasingly complex society. Chicago State University, in conjunction with a cadre of stake holders from Chicago Public Schools, implemented a professional development school pilot project (The Village Teaching Project) during the summer term of 1996. The project sought to orient preservice teachers in the early stages of their training and focused not only on discrete technical knowledge but also on issues of everyday practice for which no apparent technical knowledge exists. Expert teachers involved in the project provided a real world perspective on practice and on what underlies excellence in the teaching profession. Instruction was provided within the context of a "Village Teaching" paradigm in which knowledge represents a socially constructed entity. Broad, measurable outcomes of the project included assessment of the extent to which preservice teachers processed knowledge about the teaching experience on the basis of cognitive, emotional, or behavioral reactions. Project evaluation involved analysis of "well-remembered events" along with other journal data. The Village Teaching Project represents an attempt to address areas of need in teacher preparation by laying a foundation on which preservice teachers can build.

INTRODUCTION

Chicago State University, in collaboration with a cadre of stake holders from Chicago Public Schools, implemented a professional development school project (Village Teaching) on a pilot basis during the summer term of 1996. The project sought to orient preservice teachers in the early stages of their training and focused not only on discrete technical knowledge but also on issues of everyday practice for which no apparent technical knowledge exists. Expert administrators, teachers, and parents involved in the project provided a real world perspective on practice and on what underlies excellence in the teaching profession.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The notion of schools and universities working collaboratively to improve the quality of teaching and learning is not a new one. Recent years have heralded a renewed emphasis on collaboration in general and on school-university partnerships in particular, with a focus on teacher preparation (Carnegie, 1986; Goodlad, 1990; Holmes, 1986; Russell & Flynn, 1992; Swanson, 1995). Some of these collaborative arrangements, known as professional development schools (PDS), represent a way of strengthening the professional quality of teachers by enhancing the connection between theory and practice.

Russell and Flynn (1992) believe that if education is to mature as a profession, practice must be based increasingly on research. They note that public school educators need more interaction with those who conduct, synthesize, and disseminate education research. College of education faculty in teacher preparation programs have a wealth of information to share with practitioners. In a similar vein, university personnel need input from public school practitioners

who are directly involved in day-to-day instructional tasks and who are familiar with the dynamic needs of students. Public school practitioners can bring a realistic view to the preparation of teachers in colleges of education (Russell & Flynn, 1992). Such a level of interaction can be seen in a number of the professional development schools that have begun to emerge across the nation.

Professional development schools are usually described as exemplary, functioning schools that have as their primary mission the professional development of preservice teachers. Facilitating the professional development process may involve changes in organizational and governance structures; redesign of teacher work; reallocation of resources; improvements in the processes of teaching and learning; and changes in the relationships between and among teachers, administrators, school districts, pupils, parents, and higher education institutions (Murphy, 1990). The objective of the PDS is to provide models or prototypes of exemplary schooling with institutional structures that support improved social and academic learning for pupils and improved practice for teachers (Kennedy, 1990; Levine, 1988).

The Chicago State University Village Teaching Project incorporates a number of the characteristics typically associated with professional development schools, yet it is different in several fundamental ways. This project attempts to reach preservice teachers at the embryonic stage of their growth and awareness about the teaching profession. Project implementation occurs within the framework of required university course work and is facilitated through the team efforts of Chicago Public School master teachers, administrators, students, parents, and university personnel, who jointly plan and deliver preservice courses and seminars, and supervise structured field based learning experiences.

Through their exposure to the project, preservice teachers begin to shape a paradigm of what it means to be a teacher in a large, urban, school setting characterized by rich diversity yet plagued by economic and social issues that often interfere with effective educational practice. By the end of their semester-long experience, these teacher candidates begin to develop answers to questions regarding some of the tough issues that surface in practice but which are seldom addressed in the theory taught in most universities. As a result of their interactions with savvy administrators, expert teachers, beleaguered parents, and students, preservice teacher candidates come to understand that some of the issues facing urban public schools have no single, well-defined solutions. This awareness, in turn, influences their appreciation of the skill and fluidity with which expert educational professionals handle novel situations by drawing on creativity, collegial advice, reflection, and insight gained from years of service. Finally, the preservice teachers participating in the project are able to recognize the value of being part of a learning community and the synergistic power that emanates from such collaboration.

The project subscribes to the belief that knowledge about the teaching profession exists on at least two levels. The first level encompasses technical knowledge which is conveyed as discrete practices, methods, techniques, and tips; the second level comprises dilemmas for which no apparent technical knowledge exists. While novice teachers must rely on theory, expert teachers learn to negotiate the professional terrain by automatizing technical routines and drawing on inquiry, reflection, and other resources to facilitate execution of procedures (Sykes, 1996). Collaboration among the participants in the professional development school serves to bridge the gap between these two levels of knowledge.

Another major strength of the project is that it utilizes best practices related to adult learning. That education should be collaborative or participatory in nature is one of the most frequently mentioned characteristics of adult learning (Brookfield, 1986). Collaborative learning assumes that knowledge is socially constructed by communities of individuals and that these communities have the latitude to shape and test ideas in a process characterized by exchange of varying perspectives which leads to the evolution of new ideas (MacGregor, 1990; Novotny, Seifert & Werner, 1991; Whipple, 1987). Furthermore, collaborative learning stresses the importance of common inquiry in learning, a process through which learners begin to experience knowledge as something that is created rather than something that is transmitted from the facilitator or teacher to the learner (Sheridan, 1989).

Collaborative learning benefits the adult learner in a number of ways. In addition to providing an environment for democratic planning, decision making, and risk taking; it allows participants to acquire insights into the potential and power of groups as well as to develop their independence as learners. It further helps them develop better judgment through exposure to and discussion of previously unshared biases and enables adults to draw on their previous experiences by tapping their accumulated wisdom and knowledge (Brookfield, 1986, Bruffee, 1987, Novotny, Seifert, & Werner, 1991). As it pertains to adult learning, collaboration works best when both facilitators and learners can become active participants in the process of learning; the hierarchy between facilitators and learners is eliminated; knowledge is created, not transferred; and vital information is considered to be located in the community, rather than solely in the individual (Whipple, 1987).

Successful professional development schools involve both public schools and higher education institutions working together to address common concerns with a specific agenda for action (Russell & Flynn, 1992). Collaboration in this context, builds on the uniqueness of the organizations involved and results in a mutually beneficial relationship. This can be placed in the context of partnerships in a "village." From this perspective, collaboration gives the village an opportunity to participate in telling the "story," thus affording the village a chance to fix a perceived wrong or avail itself of collective wisdom. Thus, knowledge is socially constructed through a process we call "Village Teaching." In the context of schooling, Village Teaching can be viewed in the sense of facilitating the development of effective partnerships toward student school success: Students in this case being participants in teacher preparation programs.

The Village Teaching approach to teacher preparation, when viewed from this standpoint, holds promise for meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse student population and for improving the quality of education overall in our complex society (Swanson, 1995). In a similar vein, meaningful collaboration between public schools and universities can be thought to represent a challenge that may be central to any effort to improve education in this age of restructuring and accountability. The key to using Village Teaching as a meaningful paradigm for teacher preparation lies in our ability to discern what occurs as a result of collaboration such that the discernment may be transformed into replicable knowledge.

Discernment stands to be heightened through qualitative research with its focus on particular contexts and their meaning for the participants in these contexts (Bolster, 1983). Systematic qualitative scrutiny may be likely to reveal concepts, assumptions, expectations,

beliefs, and theories that support and inform our understandings of the teacher training process. Qualitative inquiry further helps us examine questions such as: What takes place in these collaborative endeavors? To what extent must the relationship between public schools and universities be both symbiotic and synergistic? Do participants in such projects construct ideas during collaborative episodes? How does collaboration help to narrow the chasm between the college curriculum and real-life practice? The Village Teaching Project at Chicago State University attempts to address these questions.

METHODOLOGY

Identifying unanticipated phenomena and influences, and generating new grounded theories about the latter represents one of the research purposes underpinning this project. A second research purpose was to heighten understanding of the process by which rich events and actions take place. On a more practical level, Bolster (1983) makes a more general argument, that one of the reasons for the lack of impact of educational research on educational practice has been that such research has largely been quantitative and doesn't connect with teachers' experience of everyday classroom realities. He argues for a qualitative approach that emphasizes the perspective of teachers and the understanding of particular settings as having far more potential for informing educational practitioners.

In concert with these beliefs, preservice teachers were expected to maintain a journal of their experiences during their involvement in the Village Teaching Project. These entries required analysis of classroom content as it related to field observations as well as reflection on a personal level of the overall project experience. Journals were collected at the end of the semester and

served as the basis for assessment of the project, using the "well-remembered events" approach discussed by Kathy Carter (1994). This approach focused not only on what was learned, but also on how that knowledge was acquired. Similar to the approach used by Carter, the Village Teaching Project attempted to capture the substance of preservice teachers' interpretations of the knowledge they acquired in two courses, namely, Curriculum & Instruction 152 (Introduction to Teaching) and Special Education 301 (Survey of Exceptional Children).

Researchers examined journals for remembrances about the practice of teaching, the nature of exceptional children, and the impact of "Village Teaching" on the perceptions of preservice teachers. Specific research questions included the following: What are preservice teachers' perceptions of teaching practice and exceptional children? What did preservice teachers remember from students, teachers, administrators, parents, and college professors? What is the college instructor's view of "Village Teaching"? How do preservice teachers perceive and report the effects of "Village Teaching"? What specific cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses do preservice teachers report as a result of this treatment?

Responses to the teaching experience may be defined operationally as follows: A cognitive response is one resulting in a journal entry that is expository in nature and neutral in content, using primarily words, phrases, facts, and lists. The cognitive is an intellectual interpretation of information. A behavioral response goes beyond the neutral cognitive reporting of an event and requires some motor or psychomotor movement on the part of the individual. The information motivates the individual to act in some way. The emotional response is personal and expresses feelings, negative or positive reactions, at the emotional level.

These responses were assessed within the framework of a classification scheme devised by Kvale (1996). Kvale identifies several types of knowledge that may be obtained from qualitative experiences, which he categorizes as: 1) knowledge as conversation, 2) knowledge as narrative, 3) knowledge as language, 4) knowledge as content, and 5) knowledge as interrelations. Knowledge as conversation is evident in the discourse among people. Knowledge as narrative is gained from the stories that people tell about their lives and the stories they formulate in response. Knowledge as context relates to the transferability of information to other situations. Knowledge as language pertains to the words that are used to describe a particular situation. Finally, knowledge as interrelation suggests that knowledge is not inside the person or outside the person but exists in the relationship between the person and his or her context.

The perspective we used in interpreting the Village Teaching journals attempted to understand the kinds of knowledge students enrolled in the designated courses gained from this class as a 'social construction of reality." The purpose of this research was to introduce students, primarily college freshmen and sophomores, to the field of teaching through the use of Village Teaching as pedagogy. This pedagogy was predicted to be most effective if students were reached at the cognitive, behavioral and emotional levels as reflected by journal entries.

A major assumption was that the language used within each journal to describe cognitive, emotional, or behavioral reactions to lectures, films, seminars, demonstrations, visits to classrooms, museums and aquariums, etc., would reveal something about the inner-life-world of the students who composed the journals, as well as something about the knowledge each student gained from this semester's experiences. It would also reveal something about the effectiveness

of the pedagogical approach used in the course. The "text" in this instance was defined broadly as all of the "socially constructed" classroom and community experiences which went into making up this class. The "socially constructed" context included, as well, all of the interpersonal interactions that occurred during the course of the semester. It was further assumed that each student brought both unique and shared experiences to the "text," and that these experiences emanated from both unique and shared life experiences.

Onto this classification scheme of responses to the teaching experience and type of knowledge, we have superimposed a third variable, namely, presentation style of the teacher or other cadre member. Presentation styles fall into four categories.

The first category, "personal/emotional," represents a style that is highly personal and emotional, privileges feelings over facts, employs abstract images, and may be revisionary, reflective, and interpretive in nature. The teaching style associated with this first category is informal.

The second category is "anecdotal/demonstration." This style is characterized by embellishing the lecture with straightforward anecdotes, examples, or simple demonstrations. The teaching style associated with the presentation style is neutral in nature.

"Conversational," the third classification, entails dialogue between presenter and audience. "Discussion" may be an appropriate word to describe what occurs within the framework of the conversational style.

The fourth presentation style may be labeled "lecture/didactic." This style is ladened with facts, step-by-step procedures, methods, theories, and concrete information. The teaching style

associated with this presentation style is formal in nature.

If placed on a continuum, these four presentation styles might be anchored by descriptors labeled "spontaneous" and "regimented." Table 1 summarizes the classification system used to categorize journal entries for the Village Teaching Project.

Subjects

Fifty-seven (57) preservice and inservice teachers participated in the study. Subjects were enrolled in designated sections of Curriculum & Instruction 152 (Introduction to Teaching) (n = 22) and Special Education 301 (Characteristics of Exceptional Children) (n=35). These courses represent the first two in a sequence of requirements for teacher certification.

Two four-member cadres (one for each section) worked with university personnel responsible for teaching the courses. Each cadre consisted of a public school administrator, a public school teacher with expertise in a number of critical areas, a parent, and a student enrolled in Chicago Public Schools. University professors were responsible for the overall planning and coordination of each course. Public school administrators from the Chicago Systemic Initiative were recruited to share their expertise relative to site-based management, staff development, inclusion strategies, subject matter accountability, and integrated instruction models for math and science. Expert or "master" teachers for the project gave voice to "real-life" experiences pertaining to effective teaching practices; the development of classroom cultures in predominantly African-American schools; lesson planning strategies that incorporate state goals, system outcomes, and standards; effective classroom management techniques; perspectives on inclusion and other issues pertaining to moderate disorders, students with learning disabilities and behavior

disorders, and "in the trenches" wisdom about how to face the challenges of the teaching profession in an urban school setting.

Table 1. Village Teaching Classification Scheme for Journal Entries

Presentation Style	Teaching Style	Kvale's Type of Knowledge	Reaction to Teaching Experience / Level of Processing	Key Characteristics from Participant Journals
Personal/Emotional	Informal Spontaneous Abstract	Narrative Interrelation	Cognitive Emotional Behavioral	First person reactions Feelings behind words Processed both content and context
Anecdotal/Demonstration	Neutral	Context	Cognitive Behavioral	Processed both content and context
Conversational	Neutral	Conversation	Cognitive	Processed Content Categorized Information
Lecture/Didactic	Formal Regimented Concrete	Language	Cognitive	Processed content only Third person reactions

Each cadre also included parents who contributed personal experiences along with their views on education in general. They provided further insight on their perspectives with respect to effective communication between teachers and parents, their views on how the system can best respond to diversity among the children it serves, and their opinions on how the educational enterprise should be transformed to prepare students for the twenty-first century.

All cadre members engaged in an ongoing discourse with preservice teachers regarding

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appropriate practice for those served by Chicago Public Schools.

RESULTS

Kvale (1996) identifies several types of knowledge that may be extracted from qualitative experiences: 1) Knowledge as conversation; 2) knowledge as narrative; 3) knowledge as language; 4) knowledge as context; and 5) knowledge as interrelations. In addition, we have given consideration to presentation style, responses to the teaching experience, and specific perspectives expressed in the voices of those responding in the journals.

Generally, when we account for the presentation style, knowledge type, and response to teaching experience, identifiable terms and words emerged in the journal entries of the subjects. For example, for the "anecdotal/demonstration" presentation style, subjects employed knowledge as context and exhibited responses to the teaching experience that were cognitive and behavioral in nature. These respondents tended to classify, sort, and categorize the information received. Respondents tended to describe in general terms the presentation and supported this description with statements pertaining to their intentions on how they would act on the information received. In some cases, students tended to switch their vantage point or gestalt in considering a particular issue. These respondents tended to write comments describing how they were testing a new reality against what they already believed to be Truth.

According to Kvale (1996) knowledge obtained within one context is not automatically transferable to, not commensurable with, knowledge within other contexts. This brings to mind how successful teaching gets defined within the context of a classroom observation and raises the question of whether this "knowledge" of successful teaching is always applicable. For example,

Respondent 152-08 wrote in her journal "What won my ... respect for this teacher was that she actually had time set aside for a student that needed individual attention in reading. The fact that C. had organized her day to give herself time to do this ... just impressed me. My goal, from this day forward is to run a class like this."

The context of this classroom gave this individual knowledge of successful teaching (or what a "successful classroom looked like) and obviously motivated her to achieve a particular goal -- the replication of this knowledge. However, if this individual ends up in a classroom situation where each child needs individual attention, could success be easily redefined by her? In other words, to what extent does prior knowledge of success define success within a variety of contexts?

Further consider an entry from the journal of Respondent 301-11: "Guest speakers -- soldiers from the front -- on issues of coping with an exceptional child. [A.L.] and [M.Y.] a parent and a grandparent who had made a personal choice to look at their exceptional experience in the eye and not blink. In so doing, they made many personal sacrifices -- personal and professional life choices. I was personally moved by the strength they exhibited and the choices they had to make alone, especially [A.L.]. They were strange -- were they the exception or the rule?"

The "lecture/didactic" style resulted in journal entries representing knowledge as language. Students tended to respond in kind to the language that was used during the presentation. For example, if the presentation style were formal, delivering mostly facts, procedures, methods, and concrete information, students' journal entries reflected a 3rd person reporting of the details of

the lecture, discussion, or presentation.

Respondent 152-17 observed in her journal that "Today in class we had two guest speakers. The first one was [H.A.] She discussed some methods to become an effective teacher. Her first topic was on preparation .... Miss [D.W.] tried to give us a little information about how reforms come about in the school system. ... She gave us a worksheet about presenting a new idea to the local school council. This helped me get a better understanding of what actually goes on behind the scenes in school reform."

A journal entry from Respondent 152-18 exhibited a similar reaction and a terse reporting style: "Ms. [D.W.] (CSI): Chicago Systemic Initiative Design Team. Teams collaborate and design models to improve school. Different instruction strategies. Ms. [D.W] also discussed how to have school improvement. Class had a discussion on if we were given a set amount of money to run a school how would we use the money."

Knowledge as conversation resulted from the "conversational" style, which appeared only rarely during the Village Teaching experience. Yet in the cases in which the conversational style was present, conversational journal responses were provided. These were primarily cognitive in terms of reaction to the teaching experience.

The journals for C&I 152 revealed very little about conversations that took place during the course of the semester. However, occasionally there were interactions with teachers during field observations. One such interaction which was typical came from Respondent 152-02, who visited a first grade class at a private school. "I decided to interview the teacher while the kids played ... I asked her if the school's administration was supportive in assisting her as far as her

goals for the class [were concerned]." She smiled and said it was limited and that the public school she worked at [before] had more programs for the kids and she only had 22 kids in her class. ...This experience made me ask myself if all private schools are better than most public schools."

Respondent reactions to the teaching experience were strongest when the presentation style used was "personal/emotional." In the presence of this style, respondents exhibited knowledge as narrative and knowledge as interrelation and processed information along cognitive, emotional, as well as behavioral lines. Their journal entries were personal, highly contextualized, used the first-person pronoun, and reacted with terms such as "I felt ...," " I believed ..., " "I was interested ... ." Respondents in this category discussed the experience not as neutral expository but as rich, heartfelt narrative expressing feelings, beliefs, and values. Further, respondents in this category processed both content and context and described how speakers felt and reacted in certain situations.

Knowledge as interrelation manifested itself in response to the "personal/emotional" presentation style. Within this category, knowledge is not inside the person or outside the person but exists in the relationship between the person and his/her context. Thus, when Respondent 152-04 writes in her journal upon observing in a religious school that after the students recited the Pledge of Allegiance "they began to recite the Pledge for the Bible," and "this was a new experience for me ..." she is reflecting upon new knowledge gained with the context of an interrelationship between herself and this particular situation. She says she saw this as different and that this reminded her of Sunday School.

Another highly contextualized account was provided by Respondent 301-11, who wrote "What all of these speakers have done is humanize the course. Indeed, when Dr.[L.] speaks of his own experiences as a child, I listen but from a distance. I still see a white man ... who has emerged into his own, within a white society. ... No pun intended, these women have colored and rounded out his contributions, making his and their experiences meaningful for me."

This entry indicates a value laden reaction to the teaching experience. For many respondents, "personal/emotional" presentations affected values, beliefs, and attitudes, as in the case of Respondent 301-19, who writes "When I started in this class, I was unsure about exactly what I was supposed to learn. ... After listening to the guest speakers on numerous occasions, going to observation sites, and attending classes, I realized that I am not really cut out for this type of educational field."

As a result of the Village Teaching experience, Respondent 301-21 made a different decision: "I found the guest speakers to be very honest, informative, and experienced. Honest[y] is what I find important while studying the exceptional child ... I received more information and inspirational feedback from the guest speakers when they talked more on a personal note. A personal note meaning their own personal effect of having worked, lived and fought for the well being of children's rights. ... Each speaker had [his or her] own unique but honest story to tell. These stories were the backbone of my decision to work through my fears and anxieties [about] working with exceptional children."

Presentation Style

Marked differences existed between the responses emanating from C&I 152 and Spec. Ed.

301 in the knowledge as narrative realm. We believe these differences are due to variations in the presentation styles used in the two courses. The instructor for the C&I 152 course provided a self-reported description of his teaching style:

"My teaching/ instructing style is based on an eclectic approach; therefore, my classroom interaction with students has philosophical underpinnings in the educational philosophies of essentialism, progressivism, and behaviorism. In my professional judgment, the psychological base for this eclectic approach is embedded in the gestalt-field of cognitive theories, the behavioristic theories of learning and the mental discipline theories of mind substance family. ... Considering the above, my in-class teaching behavior involves moving in and out of a repertoire of teaching methods which includes ... playing, inductive thinking processes, nondirective teaching, direct instructing, and cooperative learning variations."

From reading this self-report, it becomes apparent that the teaching style is formal, structured, and methodical. In addition to that, cadre presenters for this course utilized a similar style. Presenters W. (an administrator) and A. (a teacher) tended to provide facts, procedures, and methods in a didactic format. Presenter S.A. (a parent) also presented facts, prescriptions, and methods. The use of concrete examples during the presentations yielded concrete journal responses from students. For example, the journal entries of Respondent 152-05 contain very little narrative content and are typical of the entries submitted by students in the Introduction to Teaching course. As is the case with most students in the C&I 152 course, Respondent 152-05's "journal" is primarily composed of what appears to be class notes. It is very structured, however. Salient points, nevertheless, are written down without comment. The structure of this journal and

its language reveals overwhelmingly a cognitive focus with little or no emotional tone or content. For example, there are no words used that would reveal any kind of emotional reaction to the information received or experiences experienced. In reacting to a presentation on effective teaching by a guest speaker, this student writes "get students motivated = start with a little game = work sheets or table = [use] critical thinking so students can be stimulated, not distracting the other students ... prepare a little treat/present - just use a few minutes - set a tone in the beginning ... ." The use of complete sentences is almost nonexistent throughout this journal. Therefore, the very structure of this journal provides narrative meaning beyond the "missing" narrative content.

Compare the previous style to the self-reported teaching style of the instructor for the Special Education 301 course. This presentation style is loosely structured and student centered: "I usually have a basic outline of the day's presentation on the board. I often review the previous session's content. Then I typically attempt to peak students' attention by providing "thinking" questions relevant to the day's lecture - either for small group or large group discussion. I follow this with the content presentation including a question/ discussion period relating directly to implications within educational programming. During the later part of the session students typically make presentations on relevant topics, observations, interviews, etc. I end by bringing closure through highlighting the session's significant issues and draw the educational implications."

The teaching style described here appears to be much more informal, spontaneous and abstract in nature. Implicitly, this style gives permission to students to respond in like manner. Consider the voices of two respondents from this course:

Respondent 301-14: "This class gets better each time I attend. Today's guest speakers were wonderful. I learned so much about parents of handicapped children, their feelings, and some insights of what they have gone through. It is great to be among people who have real life situations to discuss. They made me understand things that I would not have known or ever considered about parents of handicapped children ... If I had to go into a special ed class after today I am sure I would interact with the parents much better."

Respondent 301-17: "Today was our second class and we had two speakers. The first was a special education teacher and the second was a grandmother of two mentally retarded adults. Both speakers gave us much insight into their lives. I felt that the special teacher was particularly compelling and was a very inspirational teacher and speaker. ... Listening to her made me realize how strong and determined a teacher must be to teach special ed students; not only when it comes to dealing with the students but also in dealing with the parents, administrators, medical professionals, all of whom have a say in the child's well being and education. Listening to both speakers was a little unnerving also. It's hard to look at what they have accomplished and to imagine myself having that kind of strength."

DISCUSSION/ CONCLUSIONS

Based on results obtained from this study, a relationship appears to exist among presentation style, teaching style, type of knowledge, and the nature of the journal entry. In general, the more personal and emotional the presentation and the more informal the teaching style, the more abstract and contextualized was the knowledge level (i.e., knowledge as narrative, knowledge as interrelation, or knowledge as context). Voices of journal writers in this category

were rich and unencumbered. These writers appeared ready to explore, adapt, question, diverge, and innovate.

In contrast, when the presentation style was didactic and the teaching style formal, knowledge as language emerged. Words used to describe the experience tended to be concrete with journal entries expressed in language similar to the language that was used during the presentation. Processing, in turn, tended to be restricted to the cognitive level, and respondents tended to write in the third person, using content as the primary mechanism for reporting an event. Very few of the journal entries indicated a conversational style or described knowledge as conversation.

Validity

Validity is a major issue of concern for any researcher, who considers the following questions throughout a study: Are we describing accurately what we saw and heard? Are we complete? Are we imposing our framework or meaning or really understanding the perspective of the people and the meanings they attach to their words? Might there be alternative explanations or understandings for the phenomena? All of these questions and more must be considered and controlled if this study is to be replicated in the future. We recommend that successors list alternative plausible explanations for interpretations that need to be ruled out. Further consideration should be given to instances that cannot be accounted for by a particular interpretation or explanation; these instances can point up important defects in the overall accounting. Triangulation - collecting information from a diverse range of individuals and settings, using a variety of methods -- should be used in trying to reduce the risk of chance

associations and of systematic biases due to a specific method; this allows for better assessment of the generality of the explanations that are developed.

Future researchers may want to consider the use of a control group. So much has been published previously on the complaints that inservice teachers have regarding the gaps between college curriculum/instruction and the "real world." In this study, we are depending substantially on a process approach -- preservice teachers explain through their journals not only what it is they remember about the 'Village Teaching treatment' but why it is beneficial. Such data provides a rich supplement to our current knowledge base about what works in teacher preparation programs. Would the same results emerge in a control group?

Generalizability

Researchers in this project studied a single setting or a small number of individuals, using theoretical or purposive rather than probability sampling. In addition, we are not making explicit claims about the generalizability of the study. While there are probably no obvious reasons to believe that the results of this study may not apply more generally, researchers on this project are working on the idea that the theory of 'Village Teaching' can be extended to other cases (i.e., in school -- having classroom teacher to include speakers and parents to help teach the day's lesson or theme). It is obvious that this project should be replicated with a different population and on a wider scale. Results, in any event, are promising and may tend to expand our notions of reality as they pertain to preparation of teachers to serve in challenging urban school settings.

Implications for Further Study

Journal entries for C& I 152 revealed primarily a cognitive focus throughout. There was not much language that revealed the impact of an emotional experience or of knowledge and experience that would lead to behavioral change. Since all students in both classes were given the same instructions about keeping journals, the differences between the classes may be a function of the teacher's teaching style and the individual psychological makeup of each class. Our lasting impression (with some notable exceptions) was that for the most part students in the C&I 152 class wrote in their journals as if they were taking notes for an exam. What seemed to draw the most narrative reactions in the C&I 152 class, however, were the visits to classrooms for observations, visits to museum, dance presentations, and visits to the Shedd Aquarium. Because of the primarily cognitive focus of the journal entries, we conclude that the Village Teaching approach can at this time be deemed only a qualified success for these particular students. It would have been most effective if students had been impacted at the three aforementioned levels -- cognitive, emotional, and behavioral.

By contrast, students enrolled in Special Education 301 were exposed to presenters who disclosed their innermost feelings, pain, frustrations, insights, and concerns regarding exceptional children and the teaching of same. Given this scenario, it may be the case that "Village Teaching" lends itself well to pedagogical strategies that contain an emotional or a subjective approach.

The National Center for Research on Teaching at Michigan State University indicates that teachers need opportunities to work with colleagues, both in their school building and beyond. They need chances to learn from others' successes and failures and to share ideas and knowledge.

Teachers need to be part of a larger learning community that is a source of support and ideas -- a community that consists of administrators, students, parents, school councils, school boards, and business people. They need chances to experience learning in ways consistent with the reforms and to observe teaching practices that help all students achieve learner outcomes. Teachers need to develop new understandings of the subjects they teach and the roles they play in the school classroom and in the larger learning community. They need to feel they can critically assess their own practice in order to facilitate new practices. Most importantly, teachers need time and mental space to become involved in the sometimes protracted process of change. The Village Teaching Project represents an attempt to respond to these needs by laying a foundation on which preservice teachers can build.

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